REMARKS

This Amendment amends the specification, adds new claims 11-18 and amends claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8 and 10. New claims 11-17 define preferred embodiments which have been deleted from claims 1, 3, 4, 6-8 and 10. Independent method claim 18 is supported by page 5, lines 7-10. The changes to the specification correct typographical errors, and errors obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art. Claims 1-18 are pending.

The 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1-10 over U.S. Patent No. 4,508,606 to Andrade et al. in view of European Patent Publication 1 078 823 and U.S. Patent No. 6,265,690 to Fornsel et al. is respectfully traversed. The claimed process improves the adhesive bonding of crosslinked silicone surfaces by continuously spraying at least one homogenous atmospheric plasma jet onto at least part of the silicone surface, with the plasma jet generated by a rotating head having at least one plasma nozzle offset relative to the axis of rotation and capable of generating a plasma jet whose axis is parallel to the axis of rotation. The treated crosslinked silicone surface exhibits improved wettability and higher adhesive strength than untreated crosslinked silicone surfaces. See Example 1, particularly the evaluation of surface

energy and peel test results of treated crosslinked silicone surfaces compared to those of untreated crosslinked silicone surfaces.

The cited combination of references fails to raise a prima facie case of obviousness against the claimed process because one of ordinary skill in the art would not combine these references as suggested by the Patent Office. Andrade et al. teaches a process for reducing the friction resistance characteristics of various polymers (including silicone polymers) in an aqueous environment by exposing their surfaces to an oxidation treatment, preferably by radio frequency glow discharge.

Andrade et al. fails to disclose treating a crosslinked silicone surface by continuously spraying at least one homogenous atmospheric plasma jet onto at least part of the silicone surface, much less generating the plasma jet by a rotating head having at least one plasma nozzle offset relative to the axis of rotation and capable of generating a plasma jet whose axis is parallel to the axis of rotation.

European Patent Application 1 078 823 ("Europe '823") also fails to disclose or suggest treating a crosslinked silicone surface by continuously spraying at least one homogenous

atmospheric plasma jet onto at least part of the silicone surface, much less generating the plasma jet by a rotating head having at least one plasma nozzle offset relative to the axis of rotation and capable of generating a plasma jet whose axis is parallel to the axis of rotation. Instead, Europe '823 teaches the use of an adhesive agent blended into a liquid silicone rubber composition to increase its adhesion. See paragraph [0024].

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art, seeking to increase adhesion of a crosslinked silicone surface, would be led by Europe '823 to add a silicone adhesion agent to the uncured composition rather than treat the surface of the cured coating.

The deficiencies of Andrade et al. and Europe '823 are not remedied by Fornsel et al., which broadly discloses a rotating head plasma apparatus suitable for plasma surface treatment of "synthetic resins". Yet Fornsel et al. does not teach plasma surface treatment of crosslinked silicone surfaces.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of claims 1-10 are earnestly requested.

It is believed this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection of claims 1-10, and issuance of Notice of Allowance

directed to claims 1-18, are earnestly requested. The Examiner is urged to telephone the undersigned should he believe any further action is required for allowance.

It is not believed any fee is required for entry and consideration of this Amendment. Nevertheless, the Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 50-1258 in the amount of any such required fee.

Respectfully submitted,

/James C. Lydon/

James C. Lydon
Reg. No. 30,082

Atty. Case No.: **PLAS-025**
100 Daingerfield Road
Suite 100
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: (703) 838-0445
Facsimile: (703) 838-0447